



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, January 17, 2013, at 6:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Mahon called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Present at the meeting were Chairman Mahon, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Dwyer, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Flood, Councilor Harrington, Town Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Paul Micali. Vice Chair Rothhaus was excused.

Chairman Mahon made the following announcements:

Town Hall offices will be closed Monday January 21st in observance of Civil Rights Day.

Upcoming meeting schedule: Monday January 21st at 6:00 pm Budget meeting, Thursday January 24th at 7:00 pm Regular Council meeting, Monday January 28th at 6:00 pm Budget meeting, if necessary. Tuesday February 12th is the last day for petition warrant articles. Tuesday February 12th possible meeting for ratification of any outstanding union contracts.

The Town Council held a public meeting to review the 2013/14 budget, to include the following departments:

- **Media:** Media Services Coordinator Nicholas Lavallee advised the Council that tonight is Chris Gentry's last day. He wished him well in his future aspirations. Mr. Lavallee explained that the Media budget is 10% less than last year's budget. He spoke about the increase to the line item for travel and meetings. He explained the need to replace the remote equipment, upgrade studio lighting equipment and other equipment that is outdated. Councilor Boyd questioned the allocation to General Government. Councilor Boyd asked if the School Board was asked to contribute to the cost of replacing the remote equipment. Mr. Lavallee stated that he had not requested a contribution from the School Board. Councilor Boyd asked if Mr. Gentry's position would be filled. Mr. Lavallee confirmed that the position would be filled as well as a part time assistant. Councilor Harrington questioned if the cable franchise fees covers the entire Media budget. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel confirmed that it does. Councilor Koenig questioned the difference of \$30,000 in office equipment. Mr. Lavallee stated that in prior years there were building and equipment improvements. Councilor Dwyer commended the department for their efforts.
- **Adult Community Center:** John O'Leary Adult Community Center (JOACC) Board of Directors Vice Chairman Dan Bittel and JOACC Board of Directors member Mr. Norm Carr addressed the Council. Mr. Carr advised the Council that the budget is flat and the Town's subsidy is unchanged. He stated that the overall expenditures are expected to be down by \$4,000. Chairman Mahon questioned the line item for building improvements for \$3,000. Mr. Carr explained that it is improvements done inside the building such as tables, decorations and furniture upholstery. Councilor Flood asked JOACC Facility Manager Mr. Steve Dembow to elaborate on his responsibilities as coordinator. Mr. Dembow read a prepared overview of his duties. Mr. Dembow stated that there is one contract custodian and the opening and closing custodian. Councilor Flood would like the recycling bins to be removed. Councilor Dwyer commended Mr. Dembow for his continued service. Councilor Boyd suggested changing the title for Mr. Dembow's position. He suggested Center Administrator or something that encompasses more of his duties. Chairman Mahon asked if Mr. Dembow has a contract. He cautioned how changes could negatively impact the Town and Mr. Dembow.
- **Assessing:** Town Manager Eileen Cabanel presented the Assessing budget advising the Council that the budget is unchanged. She outlined the slight increase to the contract assessing services line item. Councilor Boyd questioned if the Assessing and Community Development departments are coordinating

mapping needs. Paul Micali advised the Council that Assessing, pursuant State law, must update the tax maps annually.

- **General Government:** Town Manager Eileen Cabanel outlined the proposed changes to the General Government budget. She explained the changes to compensated absences. She explained the decrease in litigation costs. Councilor Harrington questioned the change to election costs. Councilor Dwyer asked how many retirees the Town has. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel estimated 60 retirees. Councilor Boyd asked for clarification on the capital reserve fund purchases. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel explained that most of that relates to the telephone system, computer equipment and licensing. Paul Micali stressed that most of those purchases are addressing end of life for the equipment.
- **Proposed Issuance of Debt:** Finance Director Paul Micali advised the Council that this does not include a proposal of any new debt. He provided the Council with the Town's current debt schedule for Wastewater and General Fund. He advised the Council that in 2023, the Town will be debt free. She stressed that the Town has very little debt.
- **Revenues:** Town Manager Eileen Cabanel outlined the anticipated revenues. She explained that the Town takes in \$8 million to offset expenditures and the difference is made up in property taxes. She spoke about the decrease in revenues that had to be made up in cuts. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel spoke about decrease funding from the State.
- **Proposed Capital Reserve Fund (CRF):** Finance Director Paul Micali advised the Council that the tennis courts on O'Gara Drive would cost \$183,000 for a patch repair. He explained that he and the Town Manager would like to propose a warrant article to establish a CRF for tennis courts somewhere in Town. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel advised the Council that she is working on ways to meet the Town's obligation to fund \$12,000 into the ambulance fund. Councilor Dwyer suggested coordination with the School Board regarding the tennis courts and establishing a fund. Chairman Mahon agreed that a discussion and a decision needs to be had with the School Board. Councilor Dwyer would support a warrant article that allows the voters to decide. Paul Micali stated that the Council meets next Monday night at 6:00 pm to make final budget cuts.

Councilor Harrington commended Mr. Gentry for his service to the Town of Merrimack.

ADJOURN

MOTION was made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Dwyer to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Submitted by Tracy Doherty